Hiding in Plain Sight

Adapted from *Growing Up WILD*

Grades K-5

Students learn about camouflage adaptations by modeling predator and prey behaviors.

Materials:

- Small plastic replicas of prey animals (use replicas of local animal species, if possible)
- (Optional) Blindfold

Procedure:

1. Go to maeoe.com/mipines and use the MiPINES Map to find a nature space to visit. Get prepared to take your students off-campus. Set clear and firm expectations for being safe and smart outside.
2. Tell students they are going to play a game of hide and seek with animal replicas.
3. Choose one student to be "it." They will be a predator. Have the "predator" sit with eyes closed (or blindfolded) in the center or to one side of the nature space. Explain that this hungry predator will try to find "prey" to eat.
4. Have no more than ten students hide prey animal replicas "in plain sight". Encourage each to find a place that matches what their animal looks like. The "prey" may be partially hidden, but they must be able to "see" the predator. Each "prey" will try to hide so that it won't be eaten by the "predator". Stress that prey animal replicas should not be completely hidden from view.
5. After the students have hidden the prey animals, regroup near the "predator". Encourage the predator to open their eyes (or remove blindfolds) and point to the animals they can see. Have the other students retrieve the prey animals for the predator as they point them out. The "predator" must remain seated. Any replica found is "eaten" by the predator.
6. Which animals were the easiest to find? The most difficult? Why? Encourage students to discuss.
7. Repeat the game with a new "predator". You might use different prey replicas. Do the results differ? How? Why?
8. Introduce the term "camouflage" to the group. Did any of the prey replicas have camouflage traits? If an animal has camouflage in one habitat, is it camouflaged in every habitat?